Bill against India in US Congress

3086. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a Bill has been passed by US Congress imposing restriction on aid to India due to non-payment of tax for a building in New York;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the action being taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) The US Congress has not passed such a bill till date. While considering State Department's Authorization Bill (S-925), Democrat Senator Charles E. Schumer from New York had introduced an Amendment No. 1188 titled 'Penalty for Unpaid Property Taxes' on July 10, 2003. It proposed that an amount equal to 110% of the total amount of unpaid property tax owed by a foreign country to the District of Columbia and New York City shall be with held from the aid earmarked for that country. This amendment was unanimously agreed to through voice vote by the US Senate. However, the main bill S-925 has not been voted upon in the Senate till date.

(c) Since the claim of the City of New York on real estate taxes and interest thereon for the Government-owned Permanent Mission of India (PMI) building in New York has not been found justifiable, it is being contested by the Government of India in the Supreme Court of the State of New York.

US support to India for permanent seat in security council

3087. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether India has taken up its demand of permanent seat in the UN Security Council at appropriate level;

(b) If so, the details in this regard;

(c) the US stand in this regard and whether USA has offered India conditional support on this issue; and

(d) what steps are being taken by India to firm up its claim?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH):(a) to (d) India's claim for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council has been taken up at the appropriate level with various countries in the UN or in bilateral exchanges. The response has been encouraging and a large number of countries, including some permanent members of the Council, have expressed support for India's candidature. The US is among countries that have not officially taken a firm position on the question of Security Council expansion. India will continue its efforts to secure support from as many countries as possible.

Inter-Ministerial Committee to review passport issuance procedure

3088. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have constituted Inter-Ministerial Committee to review the system of issue passports and simplifying it;

(b) whether it has submitted its report; if so, the details thereof and action taken thereon;

(c) whether registration of Adoption Deed is mandatory for the passport of adopted child;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor along with the rule/provision in this regard;

(e) whether the said Committee considered this provision; and

(f) the details regarding applications received in May, 2003 in Delhi for passport of adopted minors, passport issued, representation received from non-issuance of passport till date and the action taken on such representations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) The Committee on Review of Passport Issue System was set up in March, 2001 and submitted its